

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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STATE FOR EUR/WE
PASS TO AMBASSADOR GARDNER

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SOPN,IT
SUBJ: PRESS REACTION--CARTER/ANDREOTTI MEETING

1. TWO OF ITALY'S MOST IMPORTANT WEEKLY NEWS MAGAZINES TODAY REPORT ON PRIME MINISTER ANDREOTTI'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CARTER AND INTERPRET THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THEIR TALKS.
2. MASSIMO CONTI IN JUNE 13 ISSUE OF "PANORAMA " (CARTER'S NIHIL OBSTAT) SAYS ANDREOTTI HAS SUCCEEDED IN CONVINCING WASHINGTON TO ACCEPT PCI PARTICIPATION IN PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY. WHILE POINTING OUT THAT CARTER'S AGREEMENT "CERTAINLY DOES NOT SIGNIFY THAT HE IS READY TO ACCEPT A FUTURE PRESENCE OF THE COMMUNISTS

IN THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT ", CONTI NEVERTHELESS CLAIMS THAT ANDREOTTI WAS ABLE TO "DISSIPATE THE LAST AMERICAN DOUBTS ABOUT THE PARTICIPATION OF THE PCI IN THE GOVERNING MAJORITY, THEREBY OBTAINING DEFINITIVE AMERICAN GUARANTEE FOR HIS INITIATIVE."

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3. REPORTING FROM WASHINGTON, CONTI SAYS THAT CARTER'S ACCEPTANCE OF THE NEW MAJORITY "IS SEEN BY MANY AS A SUBSTANTIAL CORRECTION TO THE AMERICAN POLICY TOWARDS THE PCI ANNOUNCED LAST JANUARY WHICH EXCLUDED THE COMMUNISTS FROM AMONG THE RANKS OF THE DEMOCRATIC FORCES."

4. CONTI ALSO CITES "A CONGRESSIONAL REPORT REQUESTED

BY SENATOR BIDEN" AS FURTHER EVIDENCE THAT THE USG IS NOW "MORE
RELAXED ABOUT THE RISKS THAT THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE WOULD
BRING FOR THE U.S."

5. IN A SEPARATE "PANORAMA "INTERVIEW PCI DEPUTY AND DIRECTORATE
MEMBER GIAN CARLO PAJETTA SAID THAT "THE UNITED STATES SEEKS
TO HAVE ASSUMED MORE REALISTIC AND MORE POSITIVE POSITIONS ",
ADDING THAT PCI HAD "NEVER GIVEN VERY MUCH WEIGHT "TO THE DEPARTMENT'S

JANUARY 12 STATEMENT.

6. CORRADO INCERTI, WRITING IN THE JUNE 16 ISSUE OF "L'EUROPEO "
DRAWS OPPOSITE CONCLUSION ABOUT U.S. ATTITUDE TOWARDS PCI--"
U.S. POLICY TOWARDS THE PCI HAS CHANGED --FOR THE WORSE --
BUT INDICATES THAT JANUARY 12 STATEMENT HAS BEEN OVERTAKEN
BY EVENTS." STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS WHO COUNT, THOSE WHO
REALLY INFLUENCE THE PRESIDENT AND AMERICAN POLICY....HAVE
RESOLVED THEIR DIFFERENCES. THEY ARE ALL AGAINST THE ENTRACNE
OF THE PCI IN THE GOVERNMENT. HOWEVER, THEY ALL AGREE THAT THE
POLICY SHOULD BE TO WEAR DOWN THE PCI BY INVOLVING IT IN
NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY."

7. INCERTI ALSO CLAIMS THAT CARTE WAS "PERSONALLY CONVINCED
BY ANDREOTTI'S ARGUMENTS (DURING JULY 1977 MEETING) OF THE NEED
TO OBTAIN COMMUNIST SUPPORT FOR HIS GOVERNMENT." BUT THAT "
THE HAWKS FORCED THE GOVERNMENT TO ISSUE THE FAMOUS (JANUARY 12)
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SIGNAL : WE DO NOT FAVOR COMMUNISTS IN THE GOVERNMENT."
THE VEHEMENT REACTION TO THIS INTERFERENCE FORCED THE STATE
DEPARTMENT TO UNDERSTAND THAT WAS THE WRONG TACTIC, AND
"ITALIAN CASE "HAS NOT BEEN MENTIONED SINCE."

8. TO PREVENT THE EROSION OF THE JANUARY 12 STATEMENT AND
MAINTAIN ITS USEFULNESS AS A CENTRAL POINT OF REFERENCE FOR US
POLICY TOWARD ITALY, EMBASSY STRONGLY BELIEVES IT SHOULD ISSUE
A STATEMENT ALONG FOLLOWING LINES : BEGIN TEXT SEVERAL NEWSPAPER
AND MAGAZINE STORIES HAVE APPEARED IN THE ITALIAN PRESS IN RECENT
DAYS SPECULATING ON THE NATURE AND CONTENT OF THE CONVERSATION
WHICH TOOK PLACE IN WASHINGTON BETWEEN PRESIDENT CARTER AND PRIME
MINISTER ANDREOTTI ON MAY 31.

AMONG THE ALLEGATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED IN THE PRESS
ARE CLAIMS THAT THE POSITION OF THE USG ON THE QUESTION OF THE
INFLUENCE AND PARTICIPATION OF COMMUNIST PARTIES IN WESTERN
EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS HAS CHANGED.
THE FACT IS THAT THE UNITED STATES POSITION ON THIS ISSUE
REMAINS AS EXPRESSED IN THE DECLARATION ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT
OF STATE ON JANUARY 12, 1978.END TEXT.

9. AMBASSADOR GARDNER IS AWARE OF THIS RECOMMENDATION AND

AGREES WITH IT .

10. BEFORE ISSUING STATEMENT, EMBASSY WOULD INFORM PRIME
MINISTER'S OFFICE,AS A MATTER OF COURTESY.HOLMES

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